



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
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For Immediate Release

You CAN Have it All!

***Clean water, improved wildlife habitat, a productive agriculture AND
money in the bank!***

Conservation buffers are one of the best management practices that Vermont farmers can use to protect water quality. Low cost and effective, buffers are areas or strips of land with permanent vegetation. They intercept sediment, nutrients and fertilizers coming off the land. They also reduce soil erosion, protect the soil, help improve air quality and provide better wildlife habitat.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service has a number of programs that offer technical and financial assistance to establish and maintain buffers. Other public and private organizations can also provide additional cost-sharing measures.

USDA's Farm Service Agency installs buffers under their Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This program helps farmers comply with Federal and State environmental laws, and encourages environmental enhancement. Farmers receive an annual rental payment. To compliment the benefits farmers receive for improving water quality, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture has partnered with the USDA Farm Service Agency to offer the Conservation Reserve Enhancement program. This program provides up-front incentive payments to compensate for the loss of productive agricultural land. These payments, coupled with federal cost-share money, are available to cover 90% of the costs. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also has a program that can provide the additional 10 percent, making the installation of conservation buffers a win-win situation for everyone.

Vermont landowners interested in establishing buffers should contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.